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PROBLEMS OF ADOLESCENCE

by

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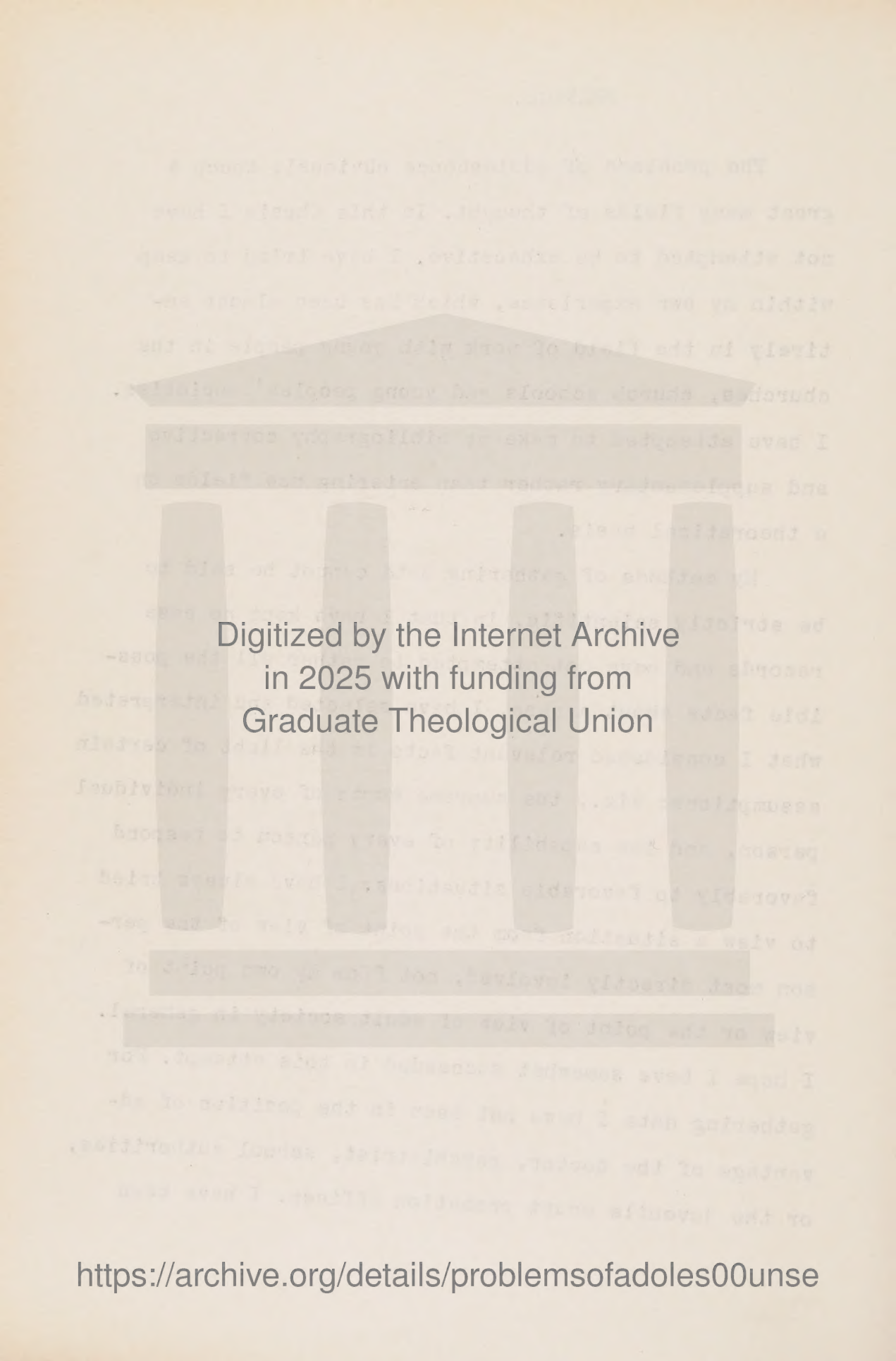
PREFACE.

The problems of adolescence obviously touch a great many fields of thought. In this thesis I have not attempted to be exhaustive. I have tried to keep within my own experience, which has been almost entirely in the field of work with young people in the churches, church schools and young peoples' societies. I have attempted to make my bibliography corrective and supplementary rather than entering new fields on a theoretical basis.

My methods of gathering data cannot be said to be strictly scientific, in that I have kept no case records and have not attempted to gather all the possible facts about a case. I have selected and interpreted what I considered relevant facts in the light of certain assumptions: viz., the supreme worth of every individual person, and the capability of every person to respond favorably to favorable situations. I have always tried to view a situation from the point of view of the person most directly involved, not from my own point of view or the point of view of adult society in general. I hope I have somewhat succeeded in this attempt. For gathering data I have not been in the position of advantage of the doctor, psychiatrist, school authorities, or the juvenile court probation officer. I have been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a friendly observer merely, with no right to pry into personal matters. I have felt that I could not abuse friendly prerogatives, nor betray confidences. My data must necessarily, therefor, be considered incomplete. However, I have endeavored not to jump to conclusions. The young people mentioned in this thesis have been under my observation for a long period of time and in a variety of circumstances.

Above all I have avoided giving the young people the impression that they were being experimented upon. I think that such an impression, even the hint of such an idea would have been fatal to further observation. The scientist in his laboratory can indulge in controlled experiments, but the observer of human beings can not treat them as the animal psychologist treats his rats. If he attempts it, his subjects no longer respond like human beings, although they may respond like rats.

In case studies the problems or the factors of t he problem converge and must be carefully analyzed out before a diagnosis can be made. In this thesis I have roughly separated the problems, although it can be seen that there is much overlapping. In true case studies no such classification can be made. For instance, a girl may be oversize, she may have religious doubts, her parents may have spoiled her, and she may be having

an unhappy love affair. It would be difficult to say just which of these factors was the determining one in her behavior problem.

The roots of human conduct are difficult to determine. They cannot be understood by the use of any ready made formula. I believe that each of the schools of psychology has contributed something to the understanding of human nature, but that none of them can claim to have found the final solution. The study of the abnormal and the unadjusted personalities has naturally been most pressing, and perhaps most interesting, and the psychiatric and social case records of the hospitals and juvenile courts have been fertile in the gathering of valuable data. However, the study of the normal individual, if such there be, and his normal relations should be of interest even to the psychiatrist. The latter should be able to recognize normality when he sees it, just as the worker with normal children and young people should be able to recognize the symptoms of abnormality and maladjustment.

I.

GROWTH AND PHYSICAL CONDITIONS OF ADOLESCENCE.

Adolescence is the period from the beginning of puberty, when the boy or girl first is capable of reproduction, to adulthood, when the individual is accepted into the adult world with all the rights and liabilities attaching thereto. In primitive societies puberty rites were closely associated with religion. It was as if the onset of adolescence marked the beginning of a new life. The youth at that time was expected to throw off his childish mode of life and enter into the adult world a totally different individual. The ordeals through which the young person was compelled to pass were designed for that particular purpose. Even today, instead of simply recognizing puberty for what it is, the time when the reproductive organs begin to function, many still regard it as a "magical time when almost anything is likely to happen."[1] Parents will say, when confronted with the behavior difficulties of their particularly trying offspring, "Well, that's adolescence for you!"

Adolescence is not a period when anything might happen, but is a period when the individual definitely enters upon a new phase of his life. To that extent

he becomes a new individual. Dr. Ernest Jones has pointed out that adolescence recapitulates infancy although upon a different level.[2] Whether or not this view is sound, it is certainly true that the adolescent does not repudiate infancy and begin all over again. Growth is a continuous process, as genetic psychology has well demonstrated.

The onset of puberty is rather definitely marked in girls by the beginning of menstruation. The chronological age at which menstruation first occurs varies greatly with individuals. Among ten thousand American born girls Dr. George Engelman has recently found the average age to be 13.9 years, while in Europe it is 15.5 years. In America a girl occasionally menstruates as young as 9.5 years, but sometimes it is delayed until 17 or 18 years.[3]

Puberty is not so well marked among boys. Dr. Godin in his Recherche Anthropometrique sur La Croissance quoted by Dr. Brooks[4] regards puberty among boys definitely established when (1) the downy pubic hair gives way to the thicker, kinky growth; (2) the voice changes; and (3) hair appears in the armpits. From these criteria Dr. Godin decided that 15.5 years was the average age for the establishment of puberty among French boys. In America the average age is probably six months or a year earlier.[5]

Dr. Richmond points out that the two factors which are probably the most important in the life of the pubescent boy are (1) the increase of sensation in the genitals resulting in increased tendency toward erection, and (2) nocturnal emmissions. "And yet," she says, "we permit him to struggle along without any knowledge to base his actions upon other than that picked up from other boys or from allusions in newspaper advertisements."[6]

Evidence presented by Terman and Baldwin[7] tends to show that superior children mature earlier than the dull. From a study made of five thousand high school boys of New York it was discovered that the boys from the country matured earlier than boys from the city.

Many factors seem to influence the onset of maturation, including heredity, race, climate, mental health, rest, sleep, overwork, exercise, disease, nutrition, etc.

Puberty marks only the beginning of physiological maturity. There are many developments yet to take place. A child's body is different from the body of an adult, both in its proportions and in chemical composition.[8] Growth proceeds at different rates in the different organs. Although a girl may outwardly appear fully matured the

development of her internal organs may not be complete. The uterus does not reach its full development until about the twentieth year.

At puberty there are a great many changes in the glandular system. The functioning of the sex glands, the ovaries and gonads, seem to be directly connected with the development of the secondary sex characteristics. The thyroid, situated in the neck, enlarges, causing a noticeable fulness of throat in young girls. If the thyroid continues to enlarge it develops into the condition known as goitre. Usually the enlargement disappears as the girl grows older. Goitre occurs more frequently in females than in males.[9] The pituatary gland lying in the cavity of the skull directly back of the bridge of the nose[10] greatly influences the growth of the individual, enormous size being caused by the over-functioning of this organ. Dr. Richmond states on the authority of Dr. Walter Timme of New York City that the cause of migraine or "sick headache" is the swelling and pressing of this gland against the bony cavity in the skull, particularly during mentruation.

Chlorosis, or "green sickness", a form of anemia, is the one disease that occurs only in

girls during adolescence.

Chorea, or "St. Vitus' Dance", is a frequent disease of puberty. It occurs more frequently among boys than girls, and is due to the nervous strain caused by puberty.

Acne or pimples is one of those annoying conditions that frequently afflict the young adolescent, particularly boys. It is due probably to unbalanced diet coupled with a general lack of coordination in the organism.[11]

The period of adolescence is a period of rapid growth, but there is sometimes a lack of coordination between the development of the bones and the development of the muscles, for instance, which is very distressing. The bones may grow faster than the muscles, or the muscles may outgrow the bones. The heart may not keep up with the arteries, etc. During this period of rapid growth the body seems to be able to resist disease better than during periods of slower growth,[12] but there is considerable strain on the nervous system, and consequently more nervous breakdowns during this period than during other more stable periods.

As for the relative development of boys and girls Dr. Brooks points out that boys are usually

taller than girls, except for a year or two between eleven and fourteen.[13] Girls seem to make their greatest gain in weight from eleven or twelve to fourteen or fifteen, and boys a year or two later.[14] Boys are heavier than girls at most ages, except for two or three years from eleven or twelve to fourteen or fifteen, when girls are heavier.[15]

These are averages. There are tremendous individual differences, as Irving King graphically portrays by his numerous illustrations.[16] These irregularities of physical development tremendously increase the problems of emotional and social adjustment. The girl of fourteen who has the appearance of a young lady of eighteen, and a boy of fourteen who still has the physical size, the high-piched voice and the babyish face of a boy of ten or twelve cannot possibly move in the same social circles. The overgrown boy and the undersized girl are not at such a social disadvantage, but there still remain a great many emotional problems.

The adolescent who is pushed beyond capacity by overly ambitious parents is bound to fail. Sometimes "advantages" in the form of too many private lessons of one kind and another, or too many social affairs, pa rticularly if they are on an adult level and not primarily for the purpose of

relaxation, will cause a complete physical collapse. Vigorous healthy parents frequently find it hard to understand the strain under which a conscientious adolescent boy or girl is struggling. Adolescents should not be pushed.

Many adolescents are very sensitive about their rate of physical growth. I think it is very unkind of adults to constantly remind them that their growth is noticeable.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter I.

1. Richmond, Winifred, The Adolescent Boy, p. 32.
2. Jones, Ernest, "Some Problems of Adolescence", British Journal of Pyschology, Vol. 13, 1922, pp. 31-47.
3. Richmond, Winifred, The Adolescent Girl, p. 25.
4. Brooks, Fowler Dell, The Psychology of Adolescence, pl 43.
5. Ibid., p. 43.
6. Richmond, The Adolescent Boy, passim.
7. Brooks, Fowler Dell, op. cit., p.43.
8. Richmond, Winifred, The Adolescent Girl, p.32
9. Ibid., p 34.
10. Ibid., p. 36.
11. Richmond, Winifred, The Adolescent Boy, p. 40.
12. Richmond, Winifred, The Adolescent Girl, p. 33.
13. Brooks, Fowler Dell, op. cit., p. 19.
14. Ibid., p. 23.
15. Ibid., p.25.
16. King, Irving, The High School Age, passim.

II.

EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS.

A. In General.

What are the distinctive emotional problems of adolescence? Perhaps they can best be grouped in two categories. The first group centers around the growing consciousness of self that is characteristic of the adolescent period; the second group has to do more particularly with the love life, the altruistic and sex emotions. Frankwood Williams has said that the two things that the adolescent had to accomplish were (1) to emmancipate himself from his home, and (2) achieve heterosexuality.[1]

I think it is a mistake to generalize very much about human tendencies, because the possibilities for individual variation are almost infinite, but certain trends or problems are so fundamental, almost biological in their nature, that we can generalize to some extent about them. For instance, every adolescent is growing out of childhood and infancy. Where he had been dependent, more or less helpless and subject to the control of others, he is now becoming more and more independent and tends to resist the control of others. Every adolescent is growing into maturity, which implies the ability

to adjust himself to the demands of adult life. He will ordinarily fall in love and reproduce his kind. There may be failures in emotional development at almost any point along the way, and for almost any number of reasons.

Growing up implies an increasing ability to control oneself, to inhibit ones impulses and direct ones emotions toward the achievement of self-chosen goals. The connection between increase of coordination and of inhibition is a matter, says Dr. Ernest Jones,[2] for further study, but inhibitions, in spite of the popular hue and cry against them, are absolutely necessary for the achievement of personality. Some psychologists believe that the chief difference between the adult and the child is the ability of the adult to endure a greater amount of pain with equanimity than the child. Inhibition involves psychic pain. It is a positive force, not a negation.[3] Inhibition does not cause neuroses. On the contrary, it is the neurotic individual who has failed to inhibit his instinctive drives, or more particularly, has failed to direct his instinctive tendencies along socially acceptable lines. One of the chief problems of the adolescent is to properly coordinate and direct his instincts, but for this task he gets very little help from any source.

Prof. Jung has divided humanity into two main emotional types, the introvert and the extravert. These types are perhaps sufficiently well known not to require detailed explanation. They are descriptive classifications. From the point of view of genetics we might say that a child is born with a certain nervous system, more or less responsive to the environment. The more responsive or sensitive child will naturally be more easily injured by his environment if his environment is unfavorable to him. He will have a tendency to become an introvert. If the environment is favorable to him, especially in his early years when his emotions are getting their start in life, he will have a tendency to expand his personality, perhaps becoming a more successful extravert than the insensitive person. By the time the child reaches adolescence his fundamental tendencies,his chief emotional reactions, such as introversion and extraversion, have become pretty well fixed; however, since puberty is the time when the reproductive organs begin to operate to serious purpose, the normal individual is led, almost in spite of himself to become emotionally objective.

The young person will be interested in something, will love some object or objects, and he will learn to direct his interest and love in accordance with the responsiveness of his environment to his immediate needs. If he meets with constant rebuffs he may become more and more introverted , or he may put on a shell of sophistication, assuming a blasé or indifferent attitude.

The problem of freeing himself from his early emotional ties (or emmancipating himself from his home) and the problem of forming new emotional ties (heterosexuality) are but two aspects of one and the same problem, but for the purposes of convenience we will examine them separately.

B. Lack of Family Affection.

The chief duty of parents, having brought children into the world, is to give them proper care, protect them during their immaturity and comparative helplessness, and finally to see to it that they are established securely in adult society. The long period of human immaturity makes child raising a very difficult task, calling for a great deal of parental devotion. It has usually been assumed that parental love is instinctive, but I do not believe that it can properly be so called, at least not in the same sense that the parental care of the animal for its offspring

is instinctive. Human parental love is made up of a great many factors, such as personal pride, vanity, desire for social esteem, desire to dominate, desire for vicarious achievement, and the like. Sometimes even these are lacking, and the child is treated with absolute indifference, even hatred, or is used for the economic advantage or selfish gratification of the parents.

The child who meets with lack of affection from his own parents, or whose home has been broken due to incompatibility of his parents with one another, is certainly in an environment which is unfavorable to his emotional development and ultimate achievement of personality. He has a sense of insecurity. A great many juvenile delinquents come from such an environment.[4] Undoubtedly there are many young people who do not reach the stage of delinquency, but whose personalities are nevertheless permanently stunted by lack of parental affection. The thing that carries many a young person through difficult periods of adjustment is the realization that the folks at home are interested and care tremendously whether or not the adjustment is successful. If such a realization is lacking, if no one cares, there is a sense of futility which paralyzes

all worthy endeavor.

Miriam Van Waters tells of a brilliant girl who became very much interested in a scientific career at college. She was going along splendidly, apparently absorbed in her work, until gradually she seemed to lose all ambition. She became listless, indifferent, and finally went into a state of complete mental collapse. Upon investigation it was discovered that her parents were completely indifferent to her college career. They were elderly people absorbed in their religion, and had lost all interest in their daughter when she became interested in science. She was not able to continue with her studies, in spite of her intellectual interest, without the emotional drive of parental affection.[5]

Case of Ellen . Ellen is a girl whose life has been practically ruined because of lack of family affection. I first met her some years ago when she came into my Sunday School class of high school girls. She impressed me as a rather withdrawn personality, intelligent, but highly critical of the very informal method I had of conducting the class. We were studying comparative religions. I soon learned that she was interested in Buddhism, Theosophy, etc. She gave a report on Buddhism for the class

and did very well. I later asked her if she would like to give another report, but she refused. She and her younger sister lived with their grandmother, whom I had met but with whom I had not become acquainted.

Ellen could not be persuaded to come Sunday evenings to the high school group meetings or to enter in any way into the social life. She said her grandmother would not permit her to be out in the evenings. Furthermore, in spite of the fact that I was particularly anxious to get acquainted with her it was very difficult to do because she would leave immediately the class session was over.

She and her sister both made confession of faith, but would not consent to be baptized.

Ellen's interests soon seemed to far outreach the interests of the other high school students, and since she was about to graduate, she was invited to attend the young people's class. During the summer the young people's class dwindled, but Ellen was very faithful. She showed a persistent interest in astrology and other occult matters and refused to interest herself in matters of a sociological nature, much to her teacher's distress.

One day Ellen was the only pupil to come to the class. Her teacher learned a great deal about her in that session. She had just graduated from high school, but she could not go on to college because of the fact that her father had insisted that she take a commercial course in high school so as to become quickly self-supporting. Her father had divorced her mother and had married again. The second wife did not wish to have money spent on the daughters. The grandmother had told Ellen that she had to find a job, but that was not easy for a sixteen year old girl to do, particularly during a depression. Ellen was a very bitter child, but, as she told her teacher, she had learned to control herself! She was considering going into one of the hospitals to train as a nurse, but she had discovered that she was too young.

Then for several Sundays Ellen did not come to Sunday School. Her sister reported that she had a job. The teacher had assigned her a topic on which to report and he was anxious to know whether she would be able to go ahead with it; moreover, since the little sister had been run over by an automobile, he felt the time was appropriate to call on the grandmother. The first call he made

alone. On the second occasion I accompanied him. There were intervening telephone calls from the grandmother.

This is what we learned from the grandmother: Ellen's mother was an immoral woman. Ellen was the reincarnation of a wicked person from some past age. She had met a sailor and was still writing to him. She had to be watched all the time or she would become immoral. When she was younger, she had been put into a Catholic school, but she had stolen some bottles of milk and altogether was so bad that the Sisters had to beat her with wires. Ellen was in trouble because she had taken some cash, a necklace, and some bars of soap from the lady she had been working for. The grandmother had marched her back withthe soap and had threatened to report her to the juvenile court, but the father had stepped in to prevent it. Ellen was then living in San Francisco with her uncle, under the supervision of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

Her father had lost his job, his wife had separated from him, and he was also living with the uncle. The grandmother was feeling very sorry for him. He had been earning $300 a month, and then to be reduced to nothing! And to have to be burdened with a daughter like Ellen! And he had been so

unfortunate in his marriages!

The grandmother was a truly marvelous combination of hatred, cruelty and piety. She had been a southern gentlewoman (so she claimed) and had been very much humiliated since coming to California because she was compelled to hang up her clothes on washdays in her own backyard.

To add to the complication of the situation, the grandmother declared that Ellen was really a very stupid girl and that the only reason she was interested in her Sunday School class was because she had fallen in love with her teacher; however, the grandmother assured him that she knew Ellen would be safe with him, "even though she threw herself into his arms."

We got in touch with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, had an interview, learned that Ellen had been provided with a temporary job, but that in the meantime she was living with her immoral mother at night and staying with her father and uncle during the day.

We called on her at her uncle's place, met the father going out, but he would not stop to talk. We invited Ellen to visit us for the two

or three weeks until her job began, but her father opposed the idea. We did persuade her to visit us on the following Saturday.

When she came, I had a long talk with her. She confessed her "sins" and had a good cry. She had taken some money from her employer, she said, because she had to have some stockings for graduation, and her grandmother would not let her have even all of the money she had earned. As for the immorality her grandmother accused her of, she denied it, and I believe truthfully. She showed me the picture of the sailor to whom she had been writing. She said she did not think her grandmother and father were fair in saying that all sailors were bad; anyway, he was the only friend she had.

She hated her grandmother; she rather respected her father; she was ashamed of her mother. These three thoroughly hated each other, and none of them wanted Ellen, but her life had been spent trying to placate all three.

The rest of the day on which Ellen visited us was spent in a manner which aimed to make her feel appreciated and understood. She was a good conversationalist, so that we really enjoyed her company. When her father called for her in the

afternoon she was quite happy.

Since that time we have received a couple of letters from Ellen. We wrote to her about the problem of suffering and the theory of reincarnation, which problems she had raised in her letters. When her temporary job was over we wrote asking her if she wanted us to try to find a place for her. She did not answer. I learned from the little sister that she had returned to live with her mother. Later I learned that she had a job as a waitress.

One could not be surprised that Ellen has developed a bitter, resentful attitude toward life. One can only marvel that she has turned out to be as decent and well-balanced as she is.

The main difference between the ancient and the modern family, according to Miriam Van Waters is that formerly "the family aided the status quo",[6] while today it merely shelters the individual until he is old enough to go his own road. However, she believes that the family must also "stiffen him to resist the encroachments of group stupidity." This may prove to be a somewhat difficult task, since "American families are arrested for the most part on a pre-adolescent level."[7] A family can be a distinct

handicap to a growing child. Without the sense of security that comes from belonging to a normal happy family group a child may not be able to cope with the problems of life. A child must feel himself accepted by his family; he must feel that he belongs. And he must feel himself accepted on a basis of equality with the other members of the family. In a family where a great deal of attention is showered upon an especially gifted member the other children may begin to feel that their efforts are futile. A child should be led to see that he is valued for himself and not just for his accomplishments, however worthy they may be.

The child who comes from a family especially prominent in the community may for a time enjoy the reflected glory. However, he or she may find it difficult to live up to the family reputation, especially if that reputation has come about through some special talent, and there may be a reaction resulting in behavior difficulties, a feeling of futility, or other unsocial attitudes. Preachers' children, for instance, whom everyone expects to be models of virtue, may react by deliberately setting out to act like demons.

Envy or jealousy is a factor which should be very carefully considered by parents, teachers or leaders of adolescents. I doubt if there is apt to be jealousy of real accomplishment. Real accomplishment is so obviously paid for by hard work, devotion, faithfulness, etc., that children are usually more than glad to give honors to anyone whom they think deserve them. What causes special difficulties is the unfairness of adults in holding up certain traits or qualities for special praise when they may not be truly worthy of praise. Adults who for reasons of their own push forward or especially reward a particular adolescent, ignoring the just claims of others to attention or commendation is apt to cause a feeling of disrepect not only for himself but for all adult society.

C. The Spoiled and Dependent Adolescent.

The phenomenon of the spoiled or dependent adolescent is probably commoner than that of the neglected one. Certainly many respectable and well-meaning parents spoil their children through ignorance or seek to keep them emotionally tied to the family without realizing the ultimate danger they are inflicting upon the child. The adolescent must

be weaned from emotional dependence upon his parents just as the infant must be weaned from a milk diet. The adolescent should be eager to venture forth into the world and to establish his affections in a new home of his own making. Many parents fail to realize this fundamental fact. They would like to keep their children at home. "A parent is bad," says Miriam Van Waters[8] "who will not let a child grow up, who does all the talking, makes all the decisions, meets all the issues, and exercises perpetual chaperonage."

There are many people who become physically detached from their homes who yet retain a childish dependence upon parental authority. On the other hand many who choose to remain in the parental home may have become psychologically free from it.[9]

The "spoiled child" reacts differently from the dependent or submissive child, but both are suffering from the same malady, emotional immaturity due to wrong parental dicipline.

The Freudian school of psychoanalysts make a great point of the "Oedipus complex", which implies that the mother and son, the father and daughter relationship is one of sexual attraction, which is however "repressed" because of the universal

incest taboos. The Freudians extend the word sex to cover a multitude of sins, but most psychologists would agree, I think, in saying that infantilism explains the emotional situation which exists between parents and children much more naturally than does the sexual attraction theory. "Indeed," says Leta S. Hollingworth, "close study of homesick adolescents would probably disclose that their depression is bound up with ministrations to bodily comfort, such as are connected with food, clothing, and shelter, more closely than the deprivation of satisfactions which are uniquely characteristic of the mate relationship. The parent is involved in the depression of the unweaned adolescent in the same way as in the depression of the infant undergoing weaning from the breast - because the parent is the purveyor of physical comfort and of habitual solicitude."[10]

It has been suggested that at adolescence it is common for the child's dependence on his parents to be sublimated, and that the idea of God takes the place of parental authority. The dominant appeal of religious symbolisms, and hymns, has been found to be to the infantile longing to return to the father or mother situation.

The cure for this is not to abolish the puerile symbols and hymns, but to achieve a more adequate adjustment of physiological, emotional, and intellectual needs to the world of reality. One's idea of God is frequently the result of sublimated infantilism, but it need not follow that pattern.

The spoiled adolescent is the one who is in love with himself. He is still in the auto-erotic stage of emotional development. Perhaps this phenomenon occurs more frequently among girls than among boys, because of the conditions which protect the girl and place such peculiar emphasis on her beauty. The pretty little girl who from her babyhood is always the center of an admiring group of relatives and friends, who is always being encouraged to show off by speaking pieces in public, who is continually being told how cute or pretty she is, is almost certain to reach adolescence believing that she is doing the world a great favor by merely existing in it, and that everyone will always be more than charmed to serve her. Some girls never outgrow this attitude. A certain young lady of my acquaintance, whom I will name Jenny, was of this type. She was a pretty, dainty, blue-eyed, curly-headed blonde,

with an innocent smile. She was not a "vamp". She didn't need to be. She paid no price for her popularity. She had one boy friend after another in rapid succession. At parties she was always the center of a group of boys, even though she was not a good conversationalist, and did nothing to entertain. Once, because of her popularity, she was asked to be on the social committee to plan a party, but she failed utterly to make good. Her mother would boastfully remark that Jenny never had any trouble having a good time at parties. It was interesting to note that most of her boy friends had the good sense to drop her, after discovering her lack of emotional response. One of her boy friends, however, committed suicide, which rather threw her into a panic, but - her stream of boy friends never ceased. She is now almost a woman and has the same babyish, innocent smile. She is, however, beginning to put on weight, and frizzle her hair more than she did. She does not look quite so charming and dainty as she did at fifteen.

With the coming of adolescence there is often a forced change of emotional viewpoint. When at the age of thirteen or fourteen, the pretty little

girl who has always been the petted darling of a large group of people takes a sudden spurt upward, so that she becomes awkward and ungainly, the emotional upheaval is almost ludicrous. It may of course result in tragedy if the family does not realize the source of the difficulty and use a great deal of tact.

Greta is fourteen, the daughter of a cultured family who by profession are constantly in the public eye. Greta had always received a great deal of attention, both because of her father's position, and because she was a pretty girl who could recite pieces in a charming manner, having received private lessons in elocution. At fourteen she is tall and fully matured, large even for a woman. She can easily pass for eighteen when she is acting as a young lady should act. However, her sudden spurt in physical growth did not bring with it a corresponding growth in mental or emotional maturity. She was thrown suddenly from a spoiled babyhood into adulthood, or at least into a position where people expected her to respond more or less as an adult would respond to situations. She was utterly incapable of making the transition. Her mother died

after a long period of illness, which greatly increased Greta's feeling of insecurity. For a time after her mother's death, because she had been thrust into the limelight, and because everyone showed her special consideration, she seemed to have turned over a new leaf. But her "great sorrow" did not suffice for long to bring her unearned popularity. As a tragic figure she was unsuccessful. People expected things of her, and she had never been trained to carry responsibility.

Before her mother's death Greta's unseemly conduct took the form of giggles, hiccoughs, shrieks, squeals and yells, excruciating mimicries and over-dressing. Greta told of an incident which is perhaps typical of her conduct at its worst. Greta and her girl friend had gone skating. It was a warm day and they became hot and tired; furthermore, they had the "giggles" and couldn't stop laughing. They went into a soft drink place to have a milk-shake. There was a young man there who reminded them of a movie comedian. They audibly commented upon this fact amidst much laughter. The young man was very meticulous in his eating, which caused more giggles and mimicry. A woman was there enjoying a cigarette. Greta exclaimed, "Oh, what an old hag!" - much to

the shock and distress of the woman. Greta disgraced herself further by tipping over her milk-shake. "We couldn't help it," she said. "We just got to laughing."

One day at church Greta and some of her girl friends were waiting outside for the services to be dismissed. There was a strange young man there also waiting. The girls began to talk about him, and dared Greta to give him a pansy. She got up, walked past him, said, "Isn't it a nice day," and threw the pansy in his face. "He was so burnt up !" she said.

Her mother's death sobered Greta considerably, but the special consideration shown her at that time served rather to spoil her all the more rather than to effect an adjustment. Her conduct began to take the form of a pose of boredom and sophistication. She would yawn in people's faces and then ostentatiously beg their pardon, covering her lips with her long fingers, the nails of which were painted a deep crimson. She persuaded her father to buy her a "formal"; thereafter she talked continually of her dates, her late hours, her formals, and her boy friends. She developed a "line" which she proceeded to try out on every man or boy who would stop to listen. Altogether she became so unpopular that

she felt she could no longer endure to associate with the young people her own age, and she was not acceptable in the college age group. She had failed utterly, and she realized it. When an invitation came from an old friend of her family inviting her to come and live with her in the east she was more than glad to accept. I feel certain that in the new environment she will learn to adjust.

The dependent adolescent is not necessarily selfish and egotistical. She may have developed a step further than the spoiled child; she may have transferred her affections from herself to her parents. At any rate her will has not been allowed to develop. She lacks initiative, cannot carry responsibility, and has retained an infantile reaction to adults in authority. Every one knows of the bachelor sons who spend their whole lives making a home for their aged mother, and who are utterly dependent upon her every whim. Everyone knows also of the middle aged women, some of them married,who can never make up their own minds about anything, who depend absolutely upon their husbands or their grown sons or some other more responsible adult to direct all their affairs. These adults have failed

to mature. They have never succeeded in emancipating themselves from their homes.

The case of Marian Mitchell reported by Elsie Smithies[12] is a good illustration of the dependent adolescent. Marian was an only child of adoring parents who were in a comfortable financial position. Her parents anticipated her every wish. She had a nurse who even dressed her until she was twelve years old. Her playmates were carefully selected for her. She was driven to and from school by her mother or her nurse. Her mother had always been able to adjust every little difficulty that Marian encountered in the grades. Until she reached high school she had never had any scholastic difficulties because her mother would carefully coach her in everything. She had no duties or responsibilities of any kind. "She has been beautifully cared for and reared," said her mother !

However, when Marian entered a progressive high school things began to change. Marian was expected to do her own work independently at the school. This she unable to do. Unless under the direct supervision of the teacher she could do nothing. She began to fail. When brought to task for her failures she would remark, "Mother will

be here pretty soon. She will explain everything." The mother suggested that Marian be allowed to bring her work home where her mother could assist her. When the school refused to allow this, the mother began to chide Marian for her laziness. But Marian could not respond . She was utterly infantile. The case worker finally persuaded Mrs. Mitchell to allow Marian to walk to and from school, where she would have a chance to amke a few normal contacts. She also was to be allowed to pick out her own clothes and gradually assume more and more responsibility for her own care. The treatment proved very successful. Mariam began to develop indepependence and interests outside the home. She even planned to go to college. Her mother, however, complained that "the school was robbing her of her child."

Tom was an only child. He lived on a farm with his parents, traveling several miles on a bus to the high school. He was a very bright boy, but until he was almost fifteen he remained physically immature. In three or four months he grew up from a little boy into a tall, lumbering young man. In his junior year in high school he fell in love with a class-mate, a girl slightly older

and more mature than himself. She returned his affection, and for a year they were constantly together. Their classmates regarded the match as practically settled. Tom's mother, however, began to be alarmed over the situation. She had nothing against the girl, except that Tom had fallen in love with her, and Tom was too young to fall in love. She began to exert every pressure to break up the match. The young people had planned that after their high school graduation they should go to college together. Tom had visited the University on one occasion and was extremely enthusiastic about it. After graduation Tom's girl friend went to the Summer Session at the University, and Tom kept up a constant correspondence with her. His mother, however, insisted on reading all his letters. He finally had to tell his girl friend that his mother thought her letters were too "mushy", and that he was not to be allowed to attend the University, but had to go to a small local college. The girl friend, of course, was broken hearted, especially because she felt that she was the reason that Tom was not allowed to attend the University. She was, however, inclined to despise him for giving in to his mother. She finally married someone else.

Tom graduated from the local college, living at home all the time. He obtained a position on a local newspaper as an assistant editor. Ten years later he married a local girl, one of his high school classmates. They built a little house on the property of his parents, close by the house of his mother. Tom starts a new novel every now and then, but never succeeds in finishing it. It is probably a futile attempt to sublimate his urge for adventurous living.

D. Homosexuality.

Homosexuality has always been a puzzling emotional perversion, not easily explainable in terms of heredity or natural selection! Although in some instances the tendency seems to be innate and without possibility of cure, ordinarily it can be traced definitely to environmental factors which cause emotional stunting. "Fixation at an infantile level , shame and disgust attached to sex activities and lack of adequate social contacts are a few of the causes of blocking."

In Greece, homosexuality was considered a part of the boys' education. Marriage was entered into

only as a duty to the state for the purpose of producing offspring. In Roman times homosexuality was recognized as a perversion but was practised a great deal. In the present stage of civilization overt homosexual practises are looked upon with horror, and they are generally considered to be confined to the abnoral individual or the pervert. Certainly homosexuality is a perversion and serves no socially useful purpose, but since it depends so largely on environmental factors for its development, one might say that it is a universal human tendency, innate in each individual. Dr. Richmond says that "the male child has to learn, so to speak, the mental amd emotional attitudes of masculinity."[14] The same principle would apply to the female child.

In the normal development of the love life of the individual, love for oneself, which is universal in infancy, develops into love for the mother or nurse as being the purveyor of comfort and protection; gradually other members of the household are included as love objects. At about the age of eight the father holds the center of the child's affections. At about ten the chum, a member of one's own sex, becomes paramount. From twelve to fifteen, the normal child is mostly interested in

his gang, club or set. He is very sensitive to their opinions. He may form close emotional ties with them. At about fifteen, the normal adolescent becomes chiefly interested in members of the opposite sex. If for any reason normal transfer of affection from the gang or members of one's own sex to the members of the opposite sex, if for instance the emotional ties connected withthe gang are especially strong, or if the adolescent becomes unduly discouraged in his early adventures toward the opposite sex, a fixation may result, and the tendency toward homosexuality may develop into a life-long reaction.

In schools where the sexes are segregated during adolescence the tendency toward "crushes" is especially prevalent. "By crush is meant that species of absorbing affection, which involves jealousy, and demands the exclusive response of the object to which it becomes attached. It is somewhat uncertain whether these evanescent crushes are to be considered psychologically as mild perversions of sex attraction or not. In the vast majority of cases no specifically sexual activity is involved, but kissing, embracing, superlative terms of endearment, the desire for exclusive

possession and the jealousy already referred to, characterize the situation, and suggest that the vague, unlocalized drives of sex are thus finding expression in the absence of more appropriate objects."[15]

If the crush is only a passing phase, as it would normally prove to be, no harm is done. However, in too many cases the adolescent is given every encouragement toward friendships or emotional experiences with members of his or her own sex,but a great many discouragements due to social convention and family prejudice are placed in the way of his forming the more healthy emotional ties with members of the opposite sex. By the very nature of the case the homosexual person is bound to be unhappy and socially unadjusted. The adolescent on account of his developing sexual nature is bound to fall in love with someone. Parents and teachers should see to it that the love object is appropriate. It is better to run the risks involved in boy and relationships than to permanently injure a child's emotions so that he becomes unfit for a normal married life.

The problem of crushes is a particularly trying one for the teacher or group leader of adolescents. To remain on friendly intimate terms with adolescents

and yet not allow crushes to develop takes skill. If the leader is unaware of the danger, or if he or she is emotionally unadjusted and craves affection, the temptation is very great to respond to the emotional crush, perhaps causing untold damage. The adolescent needs the affection and guiding love of adults, but it must be the right kind of affection.

E. Boy and Girl Relationships.

In primitive times the boy or girl upon reaching puberty was introduced into the mysteries of adult life and of sex by rites and ceremonies which left him in no doubt about how he should thereafter conduct his life. He conformed to standards fixed and unchanging from generation to generation, hallowed by both social and religious taboos. It is true that many primitive tribes did not know the relationship between sexual intercourse and pregnancy,[16] but it did not greatly affect their social life. Customs were fixed and at the appropriate time the child was introduced into those customs. Today there are many young people who are poorly or misinformed as to the nature and purpose of sex.

Not only are the children kept in ignorance, but there is no time in the development of the youth when he is formally initiated into the knowledge of the mysteries of sex. He picks up what knowledge he can from whatever source he can. It is not surprising that many boys and girls take an experimental attitude toward the whole matter.

Miriam Van Waters believes, and I think with good reason, that the small child, before he takes any emotional interest in the matter, and before he begins to express great curiosity, should be told the father's part in reproduction as well as the mothers, and should be told that sexual intercourse is an act of affection.[17] It would be difficult to estimate the amount of injury to personality caused by the lack of adequate sex knowledge. William Healy says, "We ourselves have been utterly surprised at the development of so much delinquency of various sorts from beginnings in unfortunate sex knowledge which has come into the mental field as a psychic shock producing emotional disturbance."[18]

Although neither the feeling of love nor sex cravings are lacking in the child before puberty, it is during the adolescent period that these

become united, and the individual seeks to give his affection and receive his satisfactions from the same individual. In the earlier stages of this development efforts of the adolescent may appear rather crude. There is almost simultaneously a tendency to shyness and withdrawal, which is probably significant in that it "prevents the rush into mature sex activities before the organism is ready for them,"[19] and a tendency to "rough-house" with members of the opposite sex. I am constantly reminded as I watch young adolescents of "the cave-man stuff" that one reads about. A tall intellectual young man of fifteen, a perfectly nice boy from a good home thinks it nothing amiss to hit a young lady of fourteen over the head with her umbrella. When she goes off in a huff he feels somehow that he has achieved a victory. A young man of sixteen is inclined to boast over the fact that he has managed to reduce his girl friend to tears over some of his misdeeds.

If the boys are inclined to resort to physical violence in their first approaches to the opposite sex, the girls usually present anything but an inviting front. No doubt the boys are justified. How many times I have discovered boys sulking in

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corners or on the backstairs because some girl has snubbed them! A handsome, gentlemanly boy of fifteen was the recipient of so many mean remarks and so much scornful snubbing from the girls in his class that I felt he was a most unpopular boy and began to feel very sorry for him. To my great surprise I soon discovered that as a matter of fact the girls were all secretly competing for his attentions. The competition soon became open, and I greatly fear that he became somewhat conceited over the fact that so many girls wanted him to walk home with them, etc. I once tried to introduce a young man, a newcomer, to a group of girls. They turned their backs and said with great decision, "We know him."

No doubt it is biologically sound for the young girl to repulse the advances of the young male - to the brave belong the fair! - but it makes the leadership of a mixed group of young adolescents about as exciting as would be the constant proximity of high explosive.

The uneven development of adolescents, especially the tendency for girls to mature physically before boys, makes social adjustment difficult, especially in a group based based primarily on

chronological age, or on school grade. A boy of fourteen, even though mentally superior to a group of girls of fourteen, may not be socially acceptable to them. He is too young!

There is apt to be in almost every group of young people a girl who is in some way especially attractive to the boys and who thereby becomes the special object of resentment of the girls. Gladys was such a girl. About fourteen years old, rather mature physically although not large, blonde, with a sophisticated "come-hither" look in her eyes. In the group she was always friendly, smiling, cooperative, but quiet. She would give little parties to which she would invite the boys in the group but would not ask their sisters. After the Sunday evening meetings most of the girls managed to take themselves home, but Gladys always had to have some of the boys escort her home, although she lived close by. The president of the group became her special boy friend. He spent hours of every day with her. Although he bullied her outrageously and knocked her around in regular cave-man style she didn't seem to mind in the least. It seems to me that the secret of her charm might lie in the fact that she was easy to get along with.

She is physically attractive like a kitten, and she never displays any temper, never says anything to hurt a boy's feelings; on the ontrary, she flatters him immensely by her sweet clinging attitude. While the other girls are being coy, throwing out challenges to masculine temerity, Gladys sends forth appealing smiles. The ruffled young male is convinced that here is someone who can really appreciate him. The other girls are convinced that she is unfair, unscrupulous and heartless. The average young girl meets a situation like this with a painful feeling of bafflement. She may seek to compensate by rather grotesque attempts to imitate the charmer, or she may attempt to compete in some other way, such as indulging in a rather vulgar exhibitionism, or she may seek to cast discredit upon the charmer in an attempt to eliminate her from the group. One of the age long struggles of the human race has begun. Will the modern girl solve her problem better than her ancestors solved theirs? Only time will tell.

While the adolescent is engaging in rather clumsy encounters with the opposite sex of his own age, he may at the same time be directing his "ideal" love toward someone much older, perhaps

distantly removed from him, such as an actor or actress. It may simply be a form of hero worship, or it may indicate that there is some danger that the adolescent has not completely emancipated himself from parental love, although he is establishing his heterosexuality. Preachers are especially liable to be the recipients of adolescent adoration. At a Sunday School demonstration a certain young girl was privileged to stand next to her pastor. Afterward she was overheard exclaiming with an ecstatic look and in awed tones, "I stood right next to him!"

Benjamin is an attractive boy of sixteen, not very bright, and a constant source of annoyance to his sisters because of his inappropriate behavior. At the group meetings he will talk out of turn, sing off key, run in and out, and generally make himself a nuisance. As Beth expressed it, "He is a ducky boy, but he needs someone to look out for him." Beth undertook to look out for him. Under her protecting care Benjamin began to noticeably improve. When under her spell he put on a dignity and manliness which were in sharp contrast to his squriming small boy attitudes. Unfortunately,

in Benjamin's neighborhood there lived a young lady who, although she was "ten years older" than Benjamin and engaged to someone else, took a fancy to Benjamin. She could see her fiancé only on week ends, so during the week she would call up Benjamin and invite him to call on her. Benjamin, being susceptible to attention, like a puppy, responded. When Beth heard about it she developed a bad case of nerves, and told Benjamin what she thought of him - "He was too babyish."

"Petting" has been a problem that has greatly exercised the adult mind for some time past. With our system of coeducation, combined with a growing understanding of the normal human development, contact between the sexes is almost inevitable. I believe that what dangers there are should be faced frankly and not in the old spirit of "taboo". The young people must be trusted to make their own decisions in the matter, as they will anyway. The only thing that adults can do is see to it that the young people understand exactly what is involved in "petting", and the price they will have to pay.[20] They should also be given enough opportunities for healthful and wholesome recreation that the temptations will be lessened. They should be given the chance to work off their surplus sex energy

by dances, hikes, group singing, and other forms of recreation which involve emotional release as well as physical exercise. There will always be some who try to get away by themselves during social affairs in order to pet. This should be discouraged, not, I believe, on the ground that petting is wrong, but because it will destroy the esprit de corp of the group.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter II

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III.

PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT.

A. The Individual Adjustment.

Whether or not there is a definite instinct of gregariousness there is certainly a tendency of human beings to associate with their kind. Adolescents particularly need a social group against which to project themselves, learning to act in accordance with social standards. In order to become an integrated personality the child must feel himself accepted by his group and equal to them. The adolescent will normally have a feeling of insecurity because of his lack of coordination in his neuromuscular system, and because he is constantly facing new situations for which he has not the proper techniques. His emotions drive him into situations which are a constant source of embarrassment to him.

There are several ways in which an adolescent may meet a social situation in which he feels insecure. He may face it, and although he suffers some degree of embarrassment, he will learn how to conduct himself better in the future. He will not be fright-

ened off. However, if he feels too insecure, if he has not learned the adjustments that his friends have already learned, if he has learned habits of evasion or dependence upon adult protection, he may seek to escape from the situation.

The superior adolescent may develop into a leader of his group, initiating its enterprises and dominating its viewpoints. On the other hand, the superior adolescent may have difficulties in adjusting to a group whose abilities and ideals are lower than his own, especially if in his childhood he has not developed a great deal of self confidence. Not realizing his own superiority he may actually feel himself inferior because of his inability to conform to the lower standards of the group.

If the adolescent feels himself too insecure in his social world there are various techniques which he employs to escape from it.[1]

The first technique is that of projection. Instead of admitting his own lack of ability or faulty technique the adolescent will put the blame on some circumstance, object or person. For instance, upon losing a tennis tournament a girl was heard to say, "The referee must have had drops in his eyes.

He couldn't tell when her ball was out and my ball was in. Besides, I didn't have my own racket, and my shoes were too tight." He may project his own faults upon someone else; for instance, if he cheats to pass his examinations, he accuses others of cheating. If he feels that he has been a particularly poor sport in some game or social enterprise he will accuse another person of being a poor sport. The boy who goes out of his way to accuse others of being cowardly may be simply projecting his own cowardice upon them.

Another form of escape is that of identification. This is a common phenomenon of adolescence, and is harmless unless carried to extremes. The girl will identify herself with a movie actress, for instance; the boy will identify himself with his favorite hero. The disparity between the adolescent and the adored person with whom the adolescent identifies himself may be so great as to be ludicrous. The tall ungainly girl who identifies herself with Mary Pickford, or the spindly boy who likes to think of himself as Babe Ruth, simply complicate their social problems. It may be that a girl will identify herself with her mother, even to the extent of trying to displace her in her father's affections.

Or she may think of herself as the sweetheart of some prominent man in the town. An adolescent may identify himself with some newspaper figure and may even go so far as to confess to a crime that he never committed. His identifaction may be so complete that he loses all contact with reality.

Rationalization is another common form of escape. One thinks up socially approved motives for doing what he wants to do. This is a method which may be greatly exploited by a clever young person, especially one who feels under compulsion to give an account of himself to his parents. A boy will desire to call on his girl friend, but instead of explaining his desire to his parents he will tell them that he left a book at the church which he needs for tomorrow's lessons. He gets his book from the church, (accidentally perhaps leaving his cap there) then drops in on his way home to see his girl friend. The next day he must get his cap, another good excuse to visit his girl friend. All the"good excuses" which adolescents can produce in such abundance border perilously close to lying, but are extremely difficult to detect, or to correct.

Compensation is the method of escape from feelings of inferiority. It takes a variety of forms, the most common among adolescents being bullying, teasing, sarcastic remarks, playing practical jokes, boasting, overdressing, extraordinary rudeness, etc. Not all forms of compensation are undesirable. The person who feels himself physically inferior may seek to compensate by excelling in scholarship. The dumb person may try to excel in athletics. The person socially or economically handicapped may seek to compensate by excelling in virtuous conduct. One of the chief responsibilities of the teacher or leader of adolescents is to point out socially valuable ways of compensating.

Day dreaming may be an innocent past-time or it may result in a serious personality defect. The adolescent who feels himself frustrated and misunderstood may get into the habit of imagining himself as a conquering hero, usually a rather revengeful conquering hero. Or he may enjoy commiserating with himself in the role of martyr. Fancying himself dead and enjoying the imagined sorrow of his relatives

and friends at his funeral is such a universal adolescent experience that it cannot be considered abnormal, yet it is typical of a tendency to escape into an imaginary world instead of facing the real one.

Another escape mechanism is that of displacement, the substitution of one cause for another. It may be similar to the rationalization mechanism, although it is probably subconscious and involves a more deep-lying mental confict. And it is retroactive. For instance, a girl may hate her mother. But because she cannot face that fact, she believes that her emotional concern and anxiety are due to fear for her mother's health. Although she really wants her mother to die, consciously she thinks she is afraid that her mother will die.

Mr. H. G. Wells has recently written a novel called "The Bulpington of Blup", which is a remarkable study of the psychology of evasion. It is the inside story of a mind which refused to face reality. It began with the day dreaming of a small boy and ended by the complete withdrawal of a man from the real world. The resulting moral as well as intellectual deterioration is inevitable under such

conditions. Adolescents must be taught at all costs to face reality.

A great many behavior difficulties are caused by mental conflicts which the individual is for some reason unable to resolve. Lying, stealing, and other forms of anti-social behavior may be due to repressed emotional conflicts, early injuries to the personality. A girl may steal because of some association of ideas around an emotional experience in the nature of shock of a sexual nature.[2]

A mental complex is an association of ideas with an emotional core. If it is unwelcome in the consciousness it may be repressed into the subconscious where it continues to be active without being co-ordinated with the rest of the personality. There are on record instances of multiple or split personalities.[3] The personality becomes split because of some severe mental conflict. Two or more systems of ideas seem to be able to act independently of each other, alternating with one another, each with its own memories and character traits. Several persons seem to be occupying the same body. Although the split personality is a rare occurrence, the mental conflict which may ultimately result in

such a split is not at all rare.

In cases of mental conflict which have resulted in misbehavior, Healy believes that the individuals involved have had normally stable nervous systems. There is no question of innate tendency. The child has simply met with life experiences with which he has been unable to cope. The one fact which seems to stand out in these cases is that the child has had no one to whom he felt he could turn for assistance with his problems.

The inferiority complex is one of the commonest and most widely advertised forms of mental confict. It is a condition in which a person subconsciously feels himself inferior, with good reason or for no reason, but consciously he refuses to admit his inferiority. His conduct becomes compensatory, but it is not controlled or well directed compensation. He tries to "kid" himself into believing that he is not inferior.

B. Social Institutions and Conventions.

In spite of our great emphasis on the necessity of individual adjustment, with the full realization of the tragedy resulting to the personality which fails to

adjust, it must be kept in mind that our civilization is becoming so chaotic that it is increasingly difficult for the average individual to adjust to it. There are some situations to which no human being should be expected to adjust. Personality is the result of the interaction of the hereditary or innate qualities and capacities of the individual with his environment. There are some environments which are so unfavorable to human development that the individual to save himself from utter destruction must escape, or society as a whole must come to the rescue and change the environment. The environment consists, of course, not only of the physical world but of the social and moral and spiritual worlds. Man has learned to cope with his physical environment, but the moral and spiritual forces which are the determining factors today in the development of personality are still so little understood that man, and particularly the immature or adolescent man, seems helpless before them.

Adaptation between the youth and his community is normally a difficult process. The youth lives in his own social world and only gradually does the community force itself upon him. If the community

were a unified purposefully functioning entity, the difficulty would not be so great, but since there is no community as such but communities , the adolescent is faced with the bewildering task of coordinating his life with (1) his family, which may include several "worlds" - for instance, the domestic, or social world of his mother, the business or professional world of his father, the sports world of his big brother, the religious and cultural world of his grandparents, etc., (2) the world of school, which may be utterly foreign to his home environment, (3) the world of his job, which may seem inconsistent in every way to the ideals and program of his home and school, (4) and the world of his church or neighborhood activities. There is the world of the movies, of the newspapers, of the radio. It is not surprising that the youth of today fails to adjust himself. What is he to adjust himself to?

In ancient times the youth was made to feel the force of traditions. It was assumed that he was to carry on the work that his family had begun. Customs were fixed, and his power of choice was not very great. Schoolmasters from of old have

felt it their duty to tame the impulses of the young, to direct their energies and activities along prescribed lines, to punish them for disobedience and nonconformity. Today there is no pattern which a youth may follow without falling foul of some other pattern.

Young people are especially sensitive to social approval. They are anxious to conform. If they refuse to conform to sacred family traditions it is not because they have suddenly become anti-social, but it is because they "dwell in some other island of social culture which smiles upon their activities, and which is endorsed by some powerful group of adults."[5] The adolescent will conform, but he will conform to the social group in which he feels most at home, in which he is most readily accepted as an equal. It is only when his conformity has not brought him the coveted sense of belonging that the adolescent begins to act in such a way that he will gain attention for himself if not social approval. Sometimes his nonconformity will set a new style of conduct. Having achieved a certain distinction by his daring nonconformity, the others will thereafter conform to him. Thus we have progress.

Inconsistencies of conduct which the adult has long ceased to worry about, which he accepts placidly or refuses to recognize are very much apparent to the adolescent whose every nerve is strained to catch the drift of public sentiment. Adults who applaud sentiments which they do not live up to may be content to explain their failure by referring to the weakness of human nature. To the adolescent it is rank hypocrisy, which he is apt to interpret as the approved social conduct.

Churches in order to hold the interest of young people in these troublous and chaotic times must above all else impress them with sincerity. That is the thing they are failing utterly to do.

Miriam Van Waters points out that a new social order is being brought about, - she believes bloodlessly - and youth is bearing most of the burden.[6] "Parents seem like children, and the young children, as young boys do who are drafted into a desperate war, seem mobilized and rushed prematurely into the adult world to bear the brunt of our social reconstruction; they seem older, wiser, sadder and more sophisticated than their parents."[7] But then, a world which cannot eliminate war and crime cannot be expected to concern itself with

the anguish of maladjusted children!

Because of the immorality of our civilization and the utter lack of compatibility between our social institutions and activities and our professed ideals the task of the moral educator is very difficult. Loyalty to existing institutions cannot be taught without destroying idealism. Idealism cannot be taught without developing dissatisfaction with existing conditions. In order to teach morals to youth we must have the consent of an immoral adult society.[8] "The chief requirement," says Coe, "in the way of technique is the ability to reconcile and coordinate the slower movement of maturity with the more rapid movement of childhood and youth - as for example, by persuading parents and school boards to permit the young to receive real moral education."

In order to achieve a personality a child must have a sense of security, but how shall he achieve a sense of security in a world in which every institution, including governments, and banks, are in collapse? Indeed, I think Carl Menninger is right when he says that civilization is itself a sympton of neurosis![9]

FOOTNOTES

Chapter III

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IV

MORAL AND ETHICAL PROBLEMS

While it is no doubt true that the adolescent has higher ideals than adults in that he has not yet learned the fine art of compromise, it is equally true that in his anxiety to conform he usually rather uncritically reflects the current moral attitudes. In other words, I think he usually conscientiously tries to say and do what he believes is expected of him.

H. H. Moore made a study of the attitudes of high school boys toward social problems which he reported in the Educational Review for 1917.[1] Seven hundred and seventy seven boys were asked to fill out a questionnaire which would show in the order of importance what they considered the greatest social evils of the time. The result was as follows:

1. Saloon and liquor business..... 633

2. Questionable social customs and habits, smoking, dance hall, late hours, loafing, neglect of lessons, foolish dress, etc..... 610

3. Prostitution and various sex evils 456

4. Bad industrial conditions..... 349

5. Qualities of character..... 307

6. Various aspects of poverty..... 171

7. Disease and accident..... 162

8. Various aspects of crime..... 147

9. Evils of home life..... 134

10. Dishonesty in business and public life. 116

11. War and militarism..... 78

12. Racial evils..... 19

13 Insanity and feeblemindedness..... 16

Such a study is, of course, interesting, but it probably means nothing except a reflection of current public opinion.

One cannot be moral in any true sense without the opportunity of making free choices and experiencing the consequences of those choices. The child who is taught to conform unquestioningly to parental standards is nonmoral. He will always drift with the crowd. The adolescent needs the guidance and counsel of adults, but he must be made to understand that his choices are his, and he alone is responsible for making them. Very often there is a sharp conflict of wills between the child and the adult. In a showdown the adult is apt to win, but in many cases the defeated child may have

the right on his side.[2]

True moral behavior involves (1) seeing facts in their true relations; (2) eliminating irrelevancies; (3) acting in terms of the facts as seen; (4) and in case one's judgment has been at fault, accepting the responsibility and seeking to make restitution for errors.[3] However, so much of adult behavior is prejudiced and evasive, undertaken to conform to rules instead of consequences that the child soon learns that there are two moralities, one by which he gains the prestige that goes with adult approval and the other by which he gains the liking and affection of his contemporaries. Which will he choose?

"It is a tragic thing for a child to be in the hands of parents or teachers who permit him to gain advantage or to win a position of moral superiority at the cost of the ridicule, humiliation, failure, or degredation of some other child."[4] A position of power and leadership involves very grave moral dangers under the best of conditions. The leader of a group should be carefully watched so that he will not violate the principles of democratic procedure. A leader may so easily use

his position to gain an advantage for himself or to satisfy his vanity rather than for the good of the group that the temptation to do so is often overwhelming. He must be led to understand the responsibilities of leadership as well as the privileges. A certain boy, the leader of a high school group was discovered ordering his group around in a most dictatorial manner, even resorting to violence when obedience was not immediately forthcoming. When it was pointed out to him that his methods were not conducive to gaining the cooperation of the group he seemed surprised. "Why, you have to tell them what to do, don't you?" It is such an attitude of mind which makes dictatorships possible.

Disobedience to Parents.

It is natural for the adolescent to rebel against parental authority. The wise parent is the one who asks for cooperation and consideration rather than obedience. The mere fact of parenthood does not carry with it the right to respect. Many adolescents obey their parents because it is expedient to do so. Secretly they

despise them. And the more touchy a parent is about his parental rights the more he is apt to be despised. Respect should be won; and it can be won, because there is no one on earth whom the adolescent is more anxious and willing to respect than his parents if they will only give him a chance.

By the time a child reaches adolescence if he is not able on the whole to make proper choices he has been improperly raised and it is too late for the parent to interfere. An adolescent is in the best position to know his needs and to estimate his capacities. Most often he actually does know better what he should do than his parent. It is foolish to arbitrarily attempt to direct the life of an adolescent. If he needs help he will ask for it, that is, if he has confidence in his parents. Most adolescents have a healthy confidence in their ability to make their own decisions. If they have not it should be a matter for serious alarm, because when a boy or girl after the age of fourteen or fifteen insists on direct guidance from adults there is probably something psychologically wrong.[5]

Lying

Lying is such an obvious moral defect and causes so much inconvenience to parents that it is one of the first faults to be corrected. A child soon learns that he must not be caught in an overt lie. But there are a great many ways of being deceitful without telling a direct lie. Adolescents are well aware of these methods. Whether or not he will use them depends on the circumstances in which he is placed. He may "string" someone along with great gusto without feeling the slighest moral compunctions. He will carefully throw up a smoke screen in order to evade embarassing issues. If caught in a misdeed he can usually produce a good "alibi". A mother once said to me, "I never worry about my girls. They always tell me everything they do. I know they are all right". Such confidence was a commendable parental attitude, but based on a false supposition. I doubt if any adolescent tells his parents "everything". I heard one of these daughters saying to her chum,"My sister has some-

thing on me now, so I can't tell on her anymore." It is surprising how often brothers and sisters will conspire to keep their parents ignorant of their activities. And how often one will gain some advantage over the other by threatening to "tell".

Cheating.

Cheating is the specialized form of lying which is the particular problem of the public schools. Just how prevalent it is I suppose no one knows, but everyone knows that it is not a rare occurrence. The subject of cheating once came up for discussion in a group of girls. They were discussing methods. One girl said, "I always lay the answers down beside me on the seat." "Why do you do that?" I asked. "Why," she said with a shrug, "I have to pass, don't I?" The disgrace attached to failure to pass is usually so much greater than that attached to cheating that it is no wonder that children cheat. The competitive method of teaching is a direct encouragement to dishonesty. When the whole emphasis is placed on grades and passing instead of on learning as such, children feel

that they must pass at all costs. Hence if they cannot do it honestly they will do it dishonestly. Very frequently they seem to be unaware of the dishonesty involved. To give and to receive help in times of need is one of the great Christian virtues; in the public schools it is one of the greatest of sins!

Stealing

To take what one wants or needs is a perfectly natural exercising of the acqusitive instinct. Children are taught respect for the property rights of others at great cost. To lie is immoral, but no one does anything about it unless it causes them especial annoyance, but to steal brings down the whole machinery of the law upon the head of the unfortunate juvenile. We may accuse a child of lying and no great harm is done; he may not even feel insulted. But to accuse him of stealing would be to blacken his reputation and cause everyone to look upon him with suspicion and loathing. As a matter of fact, however, most adolescents of today have not a very high degree of respect for

property. They "find" things, and they "borrow" things, and they even take things from each other by force and violence without causing very much anxiety. Most adolescents will not abuse the privilege. They develop a fine sense of discrimination and know when things can safely be taken and when they cannot safely be taken. Sometimes disrespect for property rights is directly encouraged by teachers and others in authority. A small boy once wore his grandfather's watch chain to school. A bigger boy grabbed it and took it away from him. The smaller boy appealed to the teacher who simply said, "Your mother should not have allowed you to wear that watch chain to school."

Stealing may be a symptom of a pathological condition caused by mental conflicts, but the perfectly adjusted child may take things that do not belong to him. In a properly organized society under an economy of plenty stealing would not be a crime. The day is radiply drawing near, I believe, when hoarding will be considered more of a crime than stealing. The person who will not share his

goods with another will be ostracised; taking things that one needs will be perfectly acceptable conduct.

Sexual Morality

It is in the realm of sexual morality that the younger generation are especially scandalizing the older. Dr. Winifred Richmond believes that sex relations of some sort are very common among adolescents.[7] I do not personally know of a single case, in my church groups, where an adolescent boy or girl has "gone the limit"; however, young people would not be likely to advertise the fact, and unless there is sone scandal connected with it a Sunday school teacher would not be likely to hear of it. The prevalence of contraceptives makes evasion of the consequences of sexual intercourse comparatively easy. Under such circumstances it might be difficult for a boy or girl to understand what harm is done by indulgence. Seeking a mate is a normal reaction of the healthy adolescent. Marriage, however, due to social and economic conditions is almost impossible for them. Furthermore, they get very little guidance from their elders.

They do not respect the advice that they do get, because they are well aware of the prudery and hypocrisy of the past generations in such matters. A mother of an adolescent daughter came to her pastor in great distress. She had discovered a package of contraceptives in her daughter's purse. What should she do about it? When she had rebuked her daughter, she had received this reply: "Well, mother, you wouldn't want me to have a baby, would you?"

Miriam Van Waters says, "Planned marriages are not possible unless human life is valued in and for itself; unless the life-stream is felt as a thrillingly delightful possession to be handed on with strength and vigor to the children. Since joy and virility have left the homes which produce so many of the young people who come to our courts and hospitals, it is inevitable that they will make no conscious effort to promote goals of family formation."[8]

We are still in that primitive stage of sexual morality where we seem to be much more concerned

with the letter of the law than about human values or respect for personality. "A marriage license", says Miriam Van Waters, "is like a hunting license; it is awkward to be caught without one; well-intentioned young people comply with the statute."[9]

FOOTNOTES

Chapter IV

1. Moore, H. H., "The High School Boy and Modern Social Problems", Educational Review, Vol. 54, 1927, p. 256.

2. Adams, Sir John, Everyman's Psychology, p. 83.

3. Arlitt, Ida, Adolescent Psychology, p. 203.

4. Van Waters, Miriam, Parents on Probation, p. 237.

5. Arlitt, Ida, op. cit., p. 59.

6. Healy, William, Mental Conflicts and Misconduct, passim.

7. Richmond, Winifred, The Adolescent Boy, p. 56.

8. Van Waters, Miriam, Youth in Conflict, p. 132.

9. Ibid., p. 132.

V

RELIGIOUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS

Adolescence is the time when the young boy or girl first begins to experience strange longings, to desire perhaps, to clasp the whole world to his breast. The organism becomes at that time peculiarly sensitized to beauty, rhythm, joy and sorrow. Persons take on new meanings; where before they were regarded as just part of the landscape, or as convenient extensions of one's own ego, as in the case of the gang, now they are objects of desire or of repulsion. Persons are no longer classified according to their usefulnes, but according to their attractiveness.

Some psychologists, notably Ribot, Leuba and McDougall, as pointed out by Hudson,[1] are inclined to believe that religion has its roots in the instinct of fear rather than the instinct of sex. It seems rather obvious me that the religion founded on fear is more primitive and childlike than that founded on love, or the sex instinct. The child necessarily, gains his idea of God from his relations with his parents or from his very earliest contacts with the adults who tell him about God. As he grows and puts away childish

things his idea of God becomes antiquated. Although he may still cling with fondness to childish conceptions just as he still regards his parents with a fond affection, he no longer feels the awe or reverence, no longer feels under any compulsion to obey a father God any more than he feels under compulsion to obey his parents. The experience of God which comes to adolescent youth comes to him in response to his new emotional needs, which are primarily sexual in nature. I believe G. Stanley Hall is correct in his diagnosis. He gives some striking parallelisms between adolescent love and adolescent religion. The very fact that most so-called conversions take place during adolescence should, I think, be sufficient indication of the close correlation. However, it might be interesting to list the resemblances as Hall gives them, without giving his extended arguments and illustrations.

1. Both suggest death, and may not only risk, but court, fly to, despise, and triumph over it.

2. True love and religion both make the soul highly sensitive to nature.

3. Both have their fanaticisms.

4. Lovers, almost from the lowest creatures that are sexed, are nest builders. So religion builds its towers, altars, chapels, dolmens, stonehenges, cathedrals, and shrines, where God comes down to dwell and meet the worshiper.

5. Religion, like love and the sea, ebbs and flows, and modes of abnegation are as characteristic as those of aggression and assertion.

6. The soul is especially cadenced in both love and religion by rhythm, which is potent for both.

7. Not only do both abase, but both exalt the self.

8. Both animal and human courtship have their most varied and accurately prescribed forms of etiquette and ceremony. So in wooing the favor of the divine, there are elaborate rituals, litanies, modes, postures, costumes, forms of phrase, times and places to be scrupulously observed.

9. The studies of sexual aberration show that almost any act or object can be focused on by those who are perverted or impotent, to inflame the body and soul with lust. So in the history of religions, men have made idols of almost every object in nature

which has been focused on to arouse crude and perverse religious feelings and sentiments. Thus there is a correspondence that works out in great detail between amatory fetishism and the several forms of idolatry, which resemble each other in many aspects of their symbolisms.

10. Psychology is lately learning more and more of the intersexual biotonic stimulus - that is, the effect upon both men and women of sexual selection. This too, has its religious analogue in the relations of man to God. Each in a sense and to a degree makes the other in his own image.

11. The Christian loves as the woman loves, quite as much, if not more than as the man does.

12. Once more, love and religion are analogous in that both can vivify and lend the immense influence of their vitality to almost any and every act or object, and can become gross, material, eccentric, and desiccated, and yet in periods of reawakening can slough off as dross all accretions, withdraw into central heights, find reenforcement in involution, and from thence develop newer forms of ojective expression.[2]

Dr. Hall makes great use of that biological principle, which is, however, open to question, that "ontology recapitulates phylogeny". He believes that the coming of Christianity into the world was the dawning of racial adolescence. This is a fascinating proposition, which, however, must be left to the biologists and the philosophers of history.

If one wishes to draw parallels there is an interesting analogy between the development of the emotional life of the individual, and the development of the psychology of religion as such. The three stages in the development of the psychology of relgion as given by Dr. Horton may correspond somewhat roughly to the three stages in the development of man: adolescence, maturity, and advancing old age. The psychology of primitive religions, which Dr. Horton does not mention, may be said to correspond to the pre-adolescent period. "In its first period (that is, until about 1910) the psychology of religion was concerned almost exclusively with the problem of the function of religion in the life of the individual; and the verdict was that religion

unifies and energizes personality, and gives an emotional tang to life. In the second period (approximately from 1910 to 1920) the function of religion in the life of the race became the leading problem; and the verdict was substantially as follows: Just as religion unifies and stabilizes the individual by organizing the elements of his character around some ideal of attention, so it unifies and stabilizes society by organizing its ideal aspirations around certain values socially recognized as supreme. In the third or most recent period (since 1920) the psychology of religion has extended its outlook from the social to the cosmic sphere; and religion is now commonly defined as a dangerous venture into the field of ultimate metaphysics, in quest of cosmic alliance and support - a venture which at the worst leads man to retreat into a dreamland of fantasy, as an escape-reaction against uncertainty, but which at the best leads him into an imperfect but life-sustaining adjustment to what is deepest in reality."[3]

In a footnote Dr. Horton gives us more interest-

ing detail about these periods.

"First period, 1899-1910. Chief problem, psychology of conversion. Chief method, the questionnaire. Greatest book, James's Varieties of Religious Experience. Defintion of religion 'feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves in relation to whatever they may consider the divine'

"Second period, 1910-1920. Chief problem, religion and social morality. Chief method, 'folk psychology". Greatest book, Ames's Psychology of Religious Experience. Definition of religion: 'Consciousness of the highest social values'.

"Third period, 1920- . Chief problem, religion and ultimate reality. Methods varied and complex. Greatest book, Pratt's Religious Consciousness. Definition of religion: 'the serious and social attitude of individuals or communities toward the power or powers which they conceive as having ultimate control over their interests and destinies.'"

Dr. Horton goes on to say, "If it be asked what conception of the relation of theology to religion has emerged from the investigations of religious

psychologists, the answer might be given, epigrammatically, as follows: Theology is the endeaver to organize the whole of human knowledge in the service of religion's endeaver to bring man into right organic relations with the whole of Reality. It unifies knowledge in order to help religion to unify life."

From the point of view of the adolescent, religion is to help him unify his own life. He is not greatly concerned about the social order, except that he attempts to conform to it. He feels in no way responsible for the errors of his forefathers. It is only after he discovers himself thwarted in his efforts at conformity that he begins to question the sanctity of social conventions and institutions. There is no reason why adults should expect the younger generation to be radicals, to take it upon themselves to reform the world. They are not yet sufficiently acquainted with the world to know that it needs reforming. Neither are they especially interested in ultimate reality, ultimate human destiny. They are tremendously interested in death, as it might

affect them or their loved ones, but their reaction to it is emotional. They do not want to discuss it as an intellectual proposition.

The longer I work with adolescents the more convinced I am that religion is a matter of intellectual pursuit only to the thwarted, unadjusted individuals. The happy, well-adjusted adolescent who has had a sense of security and adequacy all his life, feels no religious needs. He is concerned about his girl friends, his school work, his possible job, and his efforts to get away from parental domination. Just as the child who has never been hungry or never had a stomach-ache is apt to be unaware of the existence of his stomach, so the boy who has always encountered a friendly world, who does not feel thwarted in any of his ambitions, and whose soul has never given him any trouble is apt to be very unconcerned about religion. He takes it for granted that "God's in his Heaven; all's right with the world." It is the unhappy, thwarted, socially unadjusted adolescent who is the most religiously inclined. Did not Jesus say, "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to heal the righteous,

but sinners"? But it must be borne in mind that very few people in this day and age can adjust themselves completely on the higher levels of life.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter V

1. Hudson, Cyril E., Recent Psychology and the Christian Religion, p. 113.

2. Hall, G. Stanley, Adolescence, Vol. II, pp. 295-299.

3. Horton, Walter Marshall, A Psychological Approach to Theology, pp. 30-31.

VI

CONCLUSIONS

In order to cope with the problems of youth there are two qualities that the church needs which I fear it greatly lacks, at least in most institutions: those two qualities are sincerity and wisdom. Of these two qualities sincerity is the most important. Youth will forgive foolishness, but it cannot forgive insincerity. Religion touches the individual at his most sensitive point, the point of emotional adjustment in accordance with his highest values. Any superficiality, mawkishness, hypocrisy or even just a careless indifference to the absolute truth in its most serious aspect, will cost the institution responsible the privilege of thereafter having any religious influence over its young. The young may continue to attend services, and give lip service to its dogmas but only for their own purposes, such as social prestige, good times, etc.

Wisdom implies the understanding of persons as well as the understanding of the world and its demands,

plus the ability to apply the knowledge one has. Knowledge is absolutely essential. The human mind is an immensely complex organism, and if we are to cope with its conduct-producing powers, we must know them. There may be great obstacles to knowledge but that constitutes no excuse. Says Dr. Healy,[1] "Who professionally shall be the analyst to delve into genetics in the actual case depends in any given situation upon who is personally suited and educated for the task. It is a work for medico-psychologists and perhaps for psychologists untrained in medicine, but it also strikes one that it is a rich field for properly equipped pastors - men who, on account of their very calling, should be trained to fathom the foundations of conduct". Alas, how few pastors are so equipped!

It is needless to point out in this thesis the utterly inadequate training of most religious leaders and teachers of adolescents. Teacher training courses are for the most part very superficial. Even those texts dealing specifically with the problems of adolescent psychology are vague general statements

which are insufficient guides. "...These texts are merely outlines, and the suggestion is here made that these books should always be supplemented with much reference reading. Teachers must get more than a mere statement telling them that there are rapid changes, due to physical, mental, spiritual and social development. They knew before they took the course that the child had suddenly gone beyond their control and this was due to some change."[2]

Adolescents resent domination in their homes but they resent adult interference in their social groups even more. For this reason I think the adult leader of a group of adolescents should make it plain that he or she is acting solely in an advisory capacity. The adult leader should lead by example and not by precept. He should win the confidence and respect of the group not by reason of his years or his superior knowledge, but by reason of his integrity and trustworthiness, from the point of view of the adolescent. He is not the agent of the parents to give moral or religious instructions. It is sometimes necessary for the leader of adolescents to protect them against adult interference. Parents can help

their adolescent offspring best by giving them free reign to exercise their own initiative. If the children have been properly trained they will not take advantage of their freedom. They will turn naturally to their parents for advice if the parents have not lost their confidence.

"Young people's societies and departments steered by a headquarters staff of men and women no longer young - presented with a purpose and a constitution, and told just what to do week by week - can keep a portion of the young 'in line' so that some further manipulation by adults is possible, but they furnish no adequate nurture for the creativity that is so sorely needed."[3]

Churches must learn to be more patient with the blundering efforts of adolescents. They should come to realize that "good behavior" is not always the behavior that most nearly conforms to adult standards of conduct. They should learn to be suspicious of young people who too readily imitate their elders. Too ready conformity breeds hypocrisy.

Religious leaders of adolescents must learn to

be discriminative. They should not generalize too much about the needs of youth. They should concern themselves more greatly with the individual, but not the individual in a vacuum. Above all the leader of adolescents needs poise, self-control and patience. He needs to be "game" for anything, because adolescents will time and again deliberately "try him out". If he is found wanting according to the standards of the young people he will be unable to win their confidence. He might just as well quit.

In conclusion it should be remembered that the problems of adolescents are infinitely complex and continuous. Adjustments may be made, but they lead to further problems. The achievement of the abundant life is not something to which one can write <u>finis</u>.

FOOTNOTES

Conclusion

1. Healy, William, Mental Conflicts and Misconduct, p. 5.

2. Clark, Deborah Annie, A Study of the Psychology of Adolescence in Religious Education, M. A. Thesis, University of California, 1922, p. 50

3. Coe, George Albert, What Ails Our Youth? p. 91.

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